

**CLAIMS**

- 1        1. A messaging system for providing messaging to end-users, the system  
2 comprising:
  - 3            a data store module for storing messages sent among the end-users, wherein  
4            each message includes one or more submessages and wherein the data  
5            store stores the messages and submessages in a relational manner.
- 1        2. The messaging system of claim 1, wherein the data store module  
2 comprises:
  - 3            a contents module adapted to store submessages of the messages sent among  
4            the end-users, wherein a message sent by a sender to a recipient  
5            includes one or more references to submessages in the contents  
6            module.
- 1        3. The messaging system of claim 2, wherein the contents module stores a  
2 plurality of submessages and wherein certain ones of the submessages are created by  
3 different end-users at different times.
- 1        4. The messaging system of claim 1, wherein the data store module stores  
2 only a single version of each message and/or submessage.
- 1        5. The messaging system of claim 1, further comprising:
  - 2            an attributes module for storing attributes of the messages and/or submessages  
3            in the data store.
- 1        6. The messaging system of claim 5, wherein the attributes module is adapted  
2 to store an attribute indicating a length of time that a message and/or submessage is  
3 retained.

1           7.       The messaging system of claim 5, wherein the attributes module is adapted  
2 to store an attribute indicating a length of time that a message and/or submessage is valid.

1           8.       The messaging system of claim 5, wherein the attributes module is adapted  
2 to store an attribute indicating security information for a message and/or submessage.

1           9.       The messaging system of claim 5, wherein the attributes module is adapted  
2 to store an attribute indicating whether a message and/or submessage can be viewed by a  
3 given end-user.

1           10.      The messaging system of claim 1, further comprising:  
2                  a relationships module for holding data describing relationships among the  
3                  messages and submessages.

1           11.      The messaging system of claim 10, wherein the relationships module is  
2 adapted to hold data describing submessages within a message.

1           12.      The messaging system of claim 1, further comprising:  
2                  a client interface module for interfacing with client applications utilized by the  
3                  end-users to access the messaging system.

1           13.      A computer program product comprising:  
2                  a computer-readable medium having computer program logic embodied  
3                  therein for providing messaging to end-users, the system comprising:  
4                  a data store module for storing messages sent among the end-users,  
5                  wherein each message includes one or more submessages and  
6                  wherein the data store stores the messages and submessages in a  
7                  relational manner.

1           14. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the data store module  
2 comprises:

3                 a contents module adapted to store submessages of the messages sent among  
4                 the end-users, wherein a message sent by a sender to a recipient  
5                 includes one or more references to submessages in the contents  
6                 module.

1           15. The computer program product of claim 14, wherein the contents module  
2 stores a plurality of submessages and wherein certain ones of the submessages are created  
3 by different end-users at different times.

1           16. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the data store module  
2 stores only a single version of each message and/or submessage.

1           17. The computer program product of claim 13, further comprising:  
2                 an attributes module for storing attributes of the messages and/or submessages  
3                 in the data store.

1           18. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the attributes module  
2 is adapted to store an attribute indicating a length of time that a message and/or  
3 submessage is retained.

1           19. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the attributes module  
2 is adapted to store an attribute indicating a length of time that a message and/or  
3 submessage is valid.

1           20. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the attributes module  
2 is adapted to store an attribute indicating security information for a message and/or  
3 submessage.

1        21. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the attributes module  
2 is adapted to store an attribute indicating whether a message and/or submessage can be  
3 viewed by a given end-user.

1        22. The computer program product of claim 13, further comprising:  
2              a relationships module for holding data describing relationships among the  
3              messages and submessages.

1        23. The computer program product of claim 22, wherein the relationships  
2 module is adapted to hold data describing submessages within a message.

1        24. The computer program product of claim 13, further comprising:  
2              a client interface module for interfacing with client applications utilized by the  
3              end-users to access the messaging system.

1        25. A computer-implemented method of providing messaging to end-users,  
2 comprising:  
3              storing messages sent among the end-users in a data store of a messaging  
4              system, wherein each message includes one or more submessages and  
5              wherein the data store stores the messages and submessages in a  
6              relational manner.

1        26. The computer-implemented method of claim 25, further comprising:  
2              defining an attributes module in the messaging system, the attributes module  
3              for storing attributes of the messages and/or submessages in the data  
4              store.

1        27. The computer-implemented method of claim 26, wherein the attributes  
2 module is adapted to store an attribute indicating a length of time that a message and/or  
3 submessage is retained.

1           28. The computer-implemented method of claim 26, wherein the attributes  
2 module is adapted to store an attribute indicating a length of time that a message and/or  
3 submessage is valid.

1           29. The computer-implemented method of claim 26, wherein the attributes  
2 module is adapted to store an attribute indicating security information for a message  
3 and/or submessage.

1           30. The computer-implemented method of claim 26, wherein the attributes  
2 module is adapted to store an attribute indicating whether a message and/or submessage  
3 can be viewed by a given end-user.

1           31. The computer-implemented method of claim 25, further comprising:  
2                 defining a relationships module in the messaging system, the relationships  
3                 module for holding data describing relationships among the messages  
4                 and submessages.

1           32. The computer-implemented method of claim 31, wherein the relationships  
2 module is adapted to hold data describing submessages within a message.